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Afghans Seem Happy That King Is Gone

KABUL, Afghanistan, July 23 (AP)—The life of the average Afghan seems little touched by the coup d'etat that overthrew the monarchy last Tuesday, but the prices of many basic commodities have dropped in Kabul.

Meat has gone from 49 cents a pound to 40 cents. Wheat, a staple of the diet, has dropped 10 to 15 per cent. Sugar is plentiful after a serious shortage for two years.

Business seems back to normal. There is no official curfew, but cars on the streets after midnight may be stopped and searched by military patrols.

Cloudspeakers on Mazari Sharif, the main square of the city of half a million people, blast Radio Afghanistan's program until 9:15 P.M. After that the only sounds are an occasional car horn, a dog's bark and the heavy boots of patroling soldiers.

During the day the soldiers stroll about or watch over demonstrations in support of the

new republican Government. Most are armed with carbines to which bayonets are fixed.

"This was a coup from the people," said an Afghan, a hotel clerk.

"When the announcement came, believe me, the waiters were dancing in the aisles. Nobody was happy with the King."

A foreign journalist spent an afternoon interviewing people on the streets and reported: "They are all so happy. They are very, very happy."

Family Reported Safe

The military coup that deposed King Mohammad Zahir Shah, who was in Italy for his health, was led by Gen. Mohammad Daud Khan, a brother-in-law of the King who ran the country as Premier from 1953 to 1963. Reports that filtered out last week said 30 or more supporters of the King were executed, but officials here insist there were no executions.

The King's wife, Queen Ho-

maira, Crown Prince Ahmad Shah, who was acting as regent, and his uncle, Shah Wali Khan, are reported safe and under house arrest in the royal palace.

The Government will not disclose the whereabouts of Mohammad Musa Shafiq, the Premier who was ousted.

Foreigners arriving on the first planes after the airport reopened Saturday were met by soldiers and herded to the terminal.

"Do you have any personal letters for anybody?" a customs man asked as he wrestled with an electric shaving kit. Every piece of luggage was searched, every envelope pruned into. An inspector who did not believe a sealed box contained fiba opened the box and the canister inside.

Letters and periodicals seemed the main objects of the search. An American news magazine was taken from a United States Government employee arriving as a tourist.

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